A

REFUTATION of the *Objections* Against the ATTRIBUTES of GOD in general.

IN A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of St. *Paul*, *September* the Fifth, 1698.

BEING

The Sixth of the LECTURE for that Year, Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Esq;

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JEREM. ix. 24.

Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exerciſe loving kindneſs, judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth: for in theſe things I delight, ſaith the Lord.

PRide and Vain-Glory, are Things which Human Nature is ſtrangely ſubject to; there being ſcarce any one ſo mean, but who judges that he hath ſomething or other that he may juſtly be Proud of, and value himſelf for. But as Pride is Folly in the general, ſo it apparently diſcovers itſelf in this reſpect, That thoſe Men are uſually moſt Vain, who have the leaſt Reaſon to be ſo, and that too in Things that are the leaſt valuable in themſelves. Thus, as the Prophet intimates in the Verſe before the Text, Men frequently glory in Bodily Strength, in Beauty, and Agility, and in the Affluence of external Poſſeſſions: Things which are the meaneſt Appurtenances to our Natures, and which are neither in our Power to get nor keep. Wiſdom indeed, and Judgment, Learning and Parts, Wit and Penetration, and all the Nobler Endowments of our Minds, are things of the greateſt intrinſick Worth and Value, and we have much more reaſon to eſteem our ſelves for them, than for all the Goods of Fortune, or any Bodily Excellencies. But yet, *Let not the wiſe man Glory in his Wiſdom and Knowledge neither*;

tho' as the Targum on the place hints, it were as great as that of *Solomon* himſelf; for we have in reality no juſt ground to value our ſelves for even *this*, when we conſider that the beſt of us have it but in a very ſlender Proportion; and that our higheſt Knowledge is very imperfect and defective. Hence it comes to paſs, or at leaſt ought to do ſo, that the Modeſty and Humility of truly knowing Men encreaſes with their Learning and Experience: Their being raiſed ſomething above the common level, inſtead of leſſening and ſhortening in their Eyes the Statures of other Men, encreaſes their Proſpect of a Boundleſs Field of Knowledge all around them; the more of which they diſcover, the more they find yet undiſcover'd. But he that knows but little, vainly thinks he knows every thing, and judges all is empty and void that is without the Bounds of his ſcanty Horizon.

Another great Vanity there is alſo in Pride, which is, That Men are frequently conceited and Proud of thoſe things, which they have the leaſt ſhare of, and are fond of ſuch Actions as do plainly diſcover their Defects. For uſually thoſe Men are moſt forward to talk of Learning, who are leaſt acquainted with Books; and thoſe make the greateſt Noiſe about, and Pretenſions to Philoſophy, who have the leaſt inſight into Nature. Thoſe who talk moſt of Certainty and Demonſtration have uſually the moſt confuſed Idea's, and the moſt Superficial Notions of things, and are the fartheſt of all Men from true Science. This is apparently ſeen in the Pretenders to Scepticiſm and Infidelity, and in all the Atheiſtical Writers. No Men expreſs themſelves with ſuch an inſupportable Inſolence

Inſolence as theſe *New Lights, theſe Reformers of our Philoſophy and our Politicks*; who yet after all are *Proud knowing nothing*, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, *Rom.* 1. 21. *But are vain in their imaginations; their fooliſh heart is darkened, and profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they become fools. And therefore it is that the wiſdom of God appears as fooliſhneſs* to them, becauſe the *carnal mind ſavoureth not the things that are of God.*

Tho' would Men but ſtudiouſly apply themſelves to conſider of, would they carefully and impartially examine into, and would they but ſeriouſly make uſe of thoſe Means that God hath graciouſly given Mankind, in order to attain a ſufficient Knowledge of his Nature and Perfections; They would then find ſo much Beauty, Wiſdom, Harmony, and Excellency in this inexhauſtible Fund of Knowledge, as would ſufficiently Reward their Pains and Endeavours. And this we may glory in; this Knowledge will be the moſt noble and honourable that our Capacities can attain unto; and in compariſon of which, there is no other Qualification and Excellence in our Natures at all valuable. For here we have an Object the greateſt and moſt perfect that can be, the more we know of which, the more we ſhall exalt and perfect our ſelves. Here are no empty Speculations; no *difficiles Nugæ*, no falſe Lights, nor Phantaſtical Appearances; but 'tis a real and ſubſtantial, an uſeful and practical Knowledge; a Knowledge that doth not only delight us for the preſent, but which brings conſtant and laſting Satisfaction here, and eternal Happineſs hereafter. *Let him* therefore *that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth God, that He is the Lord, who exerciſeth loving kindneſs, judgment*

judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth, for in theſe things do I delight, ſaith the Lord. In which words, there are theſe two Things chiefly conſiderable:

I. A Suppoſition that God is capable of being known to us by his Attributes.
II. An Account of ſome of thoſe Attributes which he exerciſeth in the Earth, and in which he delights.

Under which Two Heads, I ſhall, in purſuance of my general Deſign, endeavour to Anſwer thoſe Objections that Atheiſtical Men have brought againſt the Attributes and Perfections of the Divine Nature.

1. Here is a Suppoſition that God is capable of being known to us by his Attributes. *He that glorieth, let him glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth God, that he is the Lord, who exerciſeth loving kindneſs, judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth.*

'Tis plainly ſuppoſed here, That this Knowledge which we are directed to acquire, is a poſſible Knowledge. God would not command us to underſtand him by his Attributes of Goodneſs, Mercy and Juſtice, which he continually *exerciſeth in the Earth,* if it were impoſſible for us to attain to it: *He would not delight to* do ſuch Works in the World, if nothing of them could be known, nor himſelf by them. But the Pſalmiſt tells us, *the Lord is known by his Works:* And that *the Heavens declare his Glory, and the Firmament ſheweth his handy-work:* And St. *Paul* is expreſs, That *the Inviſible Things of Him are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead.*

And

And indeed, Theſe Attributes of God are what is moſt and beſt known to us, and from the certain Knowledge that we have of theſe, we may be effectually aſſured of the Exiſtence of ſome firſt Cauſe, ſome Supream Being in whom all theſe Attributes and Perfections muſt inhere. The Infinite Nature, indeed, of This Divine Being is Incomprehenſible to our ſhallow and ſcanty Underſtandings, and we cannot by *ſearching find it out*, nor *diſcover the Almighty unto Perfection.* But notwithſtanding we have as certain a Knowledge, and as clear Idea's of his Attributes as we have of any thing in the World. And *Grotius*'s Gloſs on this place is very juſt and proper: God doth not bid Men know him according to his Nature, which exceeds Humane Capacity to do, but according to thoſe Attributes or Properties of his which relate to Mankind, which the Hebrews call *Middôth*, i.e. thoſe Meaſures or Dimenſions of Him which are proportionable to our Underſtandings and Capacities. And ſuch his Attributes are, for we ſee them viſibly exerted in the Works of the Creation, and we find them neceſſarily included in the Notion that we have of the Supream Being, or the Firſt Cauſe of all things; as I have already ſhewed in another Diſcourſe.

But this, ſome are pleaſed to deny; and ſay, That nothing at all can be known of God, but only, that he is: for his Nature is perfectly Incomprehenſible; that we do but diſhonour God, by pretending to Underſtand and to talk about his Attributes; about which we can ſay nothing but only what ſerves to expreſs our Aſtoniſhment, Ignorance, and Ruſticity; and therefore the Civil Magiſtrate ought to determine what

what Attributes ſhall be given to the Deity. This ſeems to be the Senſe of *Vaninus*, and is plainly of Mr. *Hobbs*; and was before them of *Sextus Empiricus*. Which take in their own words:

Non Deum melius Intelligimus quam per ea quæ negamus nos Intelligere, ſaith *Vaninus* (*a*). Again, *Deum nullis tam plenè indicatum intelligimus Vocibus, quàm iis quæ Ignorantiam noſtram prætendunt. We can have*, ſaith *Mr.* Hobbs, *no Conception of the Deity, and conſequently all his Attributes ſignifie only our Inability and Defect of Power to conceive any thing concerning Him, except only this, that there is a God* (*b*). And in another place, ſaith he, *God's Attributes cannot ſignifie what he is, but ought to ſignifie our deſire to honour him; but they that venture to reaſon of his Nature from theſe Attributes of honour, loſing their Underſtanding in the very firſt Attempt, fall from one Inconvenience to another without End and Number, and do only diſcover their Aſtoniſhment and Ruſticity* (*c*). Again, *When Men* (ſaith he) *out of Principles of Natural Reaſon diſpute about the Attributes of God, they do but diſhonour him; for in the Attributes we give to God, we are not to conſider Philoſophical Truth* (*d*). And therefore he concludes, *That thoſe Attributes which the Soveraign Power ſhall ordain in the Worſhip of God, as ſigns of Honour, ought to be taken and uſed for ſuch by Private Men in their Publick Worſhip* (*e*). In which he agrees as he uſeth to do, exactly with *Sextus Empiricus*; *who tells us that the Sceptick is in the right for aſſerting Gods according to the Laws and Cuſtom of his Country; and in paying them that veneration and worſhip which on the ſame account becomes due to them,*

but

(*a*) *Amphitheatr. Provid. Ætern.* p. 9.

(*b*) Humane Nature, p. 69.

(*c*) *Leviath.* p. 374.

(*d*) *Leviath.* p. 191.

(*e*) *Leviath.* p. 192.

will not venture to determine any thing Philosophically about them (a).

Now from these Passages, I think it appears plain enough, that tho' these Men did in words pretend to own and acknowledge a God, yet in Fact they were Atheists, and had no true Belief of any such Being. For a Deity without the Attributes of *Understanding* and *Wisdom*, without *Ends* or *Design*; none of which Mr. *Hobbs* asserts expresly, *can be in God* (*b*), is a Ridiculous stupid Being, an Idol that every rational Agent must needs despise, and which can never be the Object of any one's Adoration, Love, or Obedience. To assert therefore that the Attributes of God *are not discoverable by Reason, nor agreeable to Philosophical Truth*, but may be *declared to be any* thing which the *Soveraign Power* pleases to make them; this is designedly to expose the Belief and Notion of a Deity, and to render it so Precarious, that it can be the Object of no Rational Man's Faith. And this last named Writer Treats the Deity after the same manner in most other Places of his Works; He saith, we *must not say of Him* that he is *Finite*, that *he hath figure Parts or Totality*, that *he is here or there*, that *he moveth or resteth*, or that *we can conceive or know any thing of him; for all this is to dishonour him:* And yet to say that he is an *Immaterial Substance*, that he is *an Infinite and Eternal Spirit*, is, he saith, *Nonsense*, and *what destroys and contradicts it self.* However he is willing to allow the word *Immaterial* or *Spirit* to be used towards God, as a *Mark of Honour and Respect.*

That is, we may attribute to God what we know to be Nonsense and Contradiction, and this is the *Way*

(a) Κατὰ μὲν τὰ πάτρια ἔθη καὶ τοὺς νόμους λεγὼν εἶναι Θεοὺς καὶ πᾶν τὸ εἰς τὴν τούτων θρησκείαν ἢ εὐσέβειαν συντεινὸν ποιῶν. τὸ δὲ ὅσον ἐπὶ τῇ φιλοσόφῳ ζητήσει μηδὲν προπετευόμενος. Adv. Math. p. 317.

(b) *Leviath.* p. 190.

to *Honour* him; and to ſpeak of him any other way, is to *Diſhonour* Him! Who doth not perceive that it was plainly the Deſign of this Writer to treat of the Deity after ſuch a manner, as ſhould deprive Him of all Knowledge and Care of Humane Affairs, and conſequently, effectually Baniſh out of Mens Minds a juſt Veneration for Him, and Adoration of Him? *Such* Men are the moſt Dangerous and Miſchievous of all others; *Profeſs'd Atheiſts* can do no great Harm; for all Perſons are aware of them, and will juſtly abhor the Writings and Converſation of Men that ſay boldly there is no God. But there are but few ſuch; they have found a way to paſs undiſcovered under a fairer Dreſs and a ſofter Name: They pretend to be true *Deiſts* and *ſincere Cultivators* of Natural Religion; and to have a *moſt Profound Reſpect for the Supream and Almighty Being*: But when this *Profound Reſpect* comes to be throughly examined and duly underſtood, it will appear to be the moſt abominable Abuſe that can be, and a moſt wicked and Blaſphemous Idea of the Deity. For they make him either nothing but *the Soul of the World*, *Univerſal Matter*, or *Natura Naturata*, a God that is an abſolutely neceſſary Agent, without any Rectitude in his Will; without any Knowledge, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Juſtice, Mercy, or Providence over his Works. But let ſuch Perſons take what Names they pleaſe upon themſelves, a little conſideration will ſoon diſcover what they are in reality; and, I hope, give Men a juſt abhorrence of ſuch Notions, tho' never ſo ſpeciouſly put forth.

But let us now proceed to examine what Ground there is from the Nature of the Thing, for Men to advance

advance ſuch wicked Opinions, and to ſhew the weakneſs and precariouſneſs of them. And here it muſt be premiſed and taken for granted, *that there is a God.* This is what the Perſons I am now concerned with, pretend to own, and to acknowledge. Which being ſuppoſed: It appears very plain that we may have if we will, and ſome Perſons, as I have ſhew'd (*a*), have always had, a very clear Notion or Idea of the Attributes and Perfections of ſuch a Being; as alſo that they are *fixed* and *immutable Properties* in the Divine Nature. For by profeſſing to believe a God, they muſt mean, if they mean any thing, *The firſt Cauſe and Author of all Things, and the Governour and Diſpoſer of them; A Divine Being, containing in himſelf all poſſible Perfections; without being ſubject to any manner of Defect.* This I have already hinted at in another place (*b*), and ſhall now more largely prove.

(*a*) Sermon 4*th.* and 5*th.*

(*b*) In my Second Sermon.

So far is it from being true, *that we cannot reaſon of the Nature of God from his Attributes, nor Diſcourſe of thoſe Attributes from our Reaſon*; That this ſeems to be the only proper Way of enquiring into the wonderful Depth of the Divine Perfections. I mean, the only Way we have without Revelation, for I am not now conſidering what God hath farther diſcovered of Himſelf to us by his Word. For tho' the Deity doth abound with Infinite Excellencies and Perfections; yet by the Light of Nature we can diſcover thoſe only, of which he hath given us ſome Impreſſion on our own Natures; and theſe are the Scales and Proportions by which our Reaſon muſt meaſure the Divine Attributes and Perfections. For in order to gain good and true Notions of *theſe*, we ought

to take our Riſe from thoſe Perfections and Excellencies which we find in the Creatures, and eſpecially in our ſelves.

There can be but two Ways of coming to the Knowledge of any thing; by its *Cauſe*, and by its *Effects*. 'Tis impoſſible for us to make uſe of the former of theſe, in Reference to the Deity: For He being himſelf without Cauſe, and the Firſt Cauſe and Original of all Things cannot be known to us this Way. But by the ſecond Way, he very properly may be the Object of our Knowledge, and we ought to apply our ſelves to this Method, in order to underſtand the Attributes of God. For whatever Excellency or Perfection we can any way diſcover in the *Effects* of God in the World, *i. e.* in the Works of the whole Creation; the ſame we cannot but ſuppoſe muſt be in Him, in the higheſt and moſt noble Proportion and Degree; ſince they are all owing to, and derived from Him.

And if we take a ſerious and conſiderate View of the Excellencies and Perfections that are to be found in the Creatures, or the Works of God in the World; we ſhall find that they may be reducible to theſe Four general Heads; *Being or Subſtance*, *Life*, *Senſibility*, and *Reaſon*. All which we find to be in our ſelves, and therefore they are at hand, and ready to aſſiſt our Meditations; and theſe will, if duly conſidered, lead us into a good Way of diſcovering the *Attributes* and *Perfections* of the Divine Nature. And I doubt not but a great Reaſon why Men have had and advanced wrong Notions of God, hath been becauſe they have had ſuch of themſelves, and of thoſe Perfections that are in our own Natures. Men that do not underſtand that the true Per-

Perfection of Humane Nature conſiſts in Moral Goodneſs, or in an Univerſal agreeableneſs of our Will to the Eternal Laws of Right Reaſon, cannot conceive aright of the Attributes and Perfections of God: For they will be for making *him like themſelves*, guided by vehement Self-love, and inordinate Will, or whatever predominant Paſſions poſſeſs them.

'Twere eaſie to Trace this in the Epicurean Notion of a God diſſolved in Eaſe and Sloth, and who neglects the Government of the World, to enjoy his own private Pleaſures; and in the *Hobbian* one of a Deity not guided by any Eſſential Rectitude of Will, but only by Arbitrary, Lawleſs, and irriſiſtible Power; for both theſe Opinions are exactly agreeable to the Genius and humours of their Authors and Propagators.

But to proceed with our Deduction of the Divine Attributes from the Excellencies and Perfections which we find in our ſelves. 1. If in the firſt place we conſider *Being*, and the high Perfections that do belong to it; we ſhall find that they muſt needs be in the Deity, who is the Firſt and Supream Being, and the Cauſe and Author of all others in the World, in the utmoſt Perfection. Now the higheſt Perfections belonging unto Being, we find to be theſe two: 1. That it ſhall have an underivable and neceſſary Exiſtence, *always be*, and never *ceaſe*, *die*, *terminate* or be *extinct*; and, 2. That it be *Great* and *Ample* as to its *Extent*, in oppoſition to *Littleneſs* or *Scantyneſs*, and to being *Limited*, *Circumſcribed*, *Bounded* or *Reſtrained* by any Other Thing.

And if we attribute theſe two Perfections to God, thence will plainly Ariſe his *Eternity*, and his *Immenſity* or *Omnipreſence*. For what cannot poſſibly ceaſe

ceaſe to be, but hath neceſſary Exiſtence included in its Nature, is *Eternal*. And what cannot be any way *Limited*, *Circumſcribed* or *Reſtrained*, muſt needs be *Boundleſs* and *Immenſe*, and *preſent* every where. And I dare ſay, that theſe Notions of God's *Eternity* and *Immenſity*, do find an eaſie admiſſion into, and are firmly rooted in all conſiderate and unprejudiced Minds; and who are not debauched by Sceptical and Atheiſtical Metaphyſicks. For 'tis impoſſible for any one that thinks at all, to have a Notion of a Deity that can *die*, or *ceaſe to be*; or that is ſo *confined* and *impriſoned* in *any one part of Space*, that he can extend himſelf no farther: No! it muſt be an Epicurean Stupefaction of *Soul*, indeed, that can induce a Man to fancy a *Mortal* or a *Topical God*; one that may be *ſlain*, or *die of old Age*, or be *ſhackled* and *confined* to any one part of the Univerſe, excluſive of the reſt. And tho' a Man cannot find perhaps that he hath an adequate Idea of Eternity; yet that God muſt be without Beginning or End, he will readily allow, as ſoon as he conſiders the Thing; for he will perceive that the Firſt Cauſe of all Things could not be cauſed by any thing elſe, but muſt be Self-exiſtent, and without Beginning: and if nothing could cauſe his Being, nothing can take it away neither, and conſequently he muſt be Everlaſting or Eternal. And of this Attribute the Heathens had a clear Idea and Belief, giving God the Title of Ἀθάναται, and Swearing uſually by the *Immortal Gods*. *Tully* ſaith, *Deum niſi Sempiternum Intelligere quî poſſumus?* How can we conceive the Deity any otherwiſe than to be an Eternal Being. And *Ariſtotle* in many places makes Eternity Eſſential to the Idea of God; and particularly, *Lib.* 2. *de Cœlo.* And

And ſo as to *Immenſity* or *Omnipreſence*, tho' he, indeed, cannot tell the manner how a *Spirit* or *Immaterial Subſtance* permeates Matter, or is preſent to every part of it; yet he will conclude that the Deity muſt ſome how or other actually *fill* and *be preſent with all* things; ſince 'tis impoſſible he ſhould be *excluded* any where, or be in any reſpect *bounded* or *limited*; as 'tis alſo that he ſhould act or operate where he is not. Nor would, I believe, any free and unprejudiced Mind have recourſe either to the Notion of God's being *Univerſal Matter* or *Infinite Space*, in order to ſolve His *Immenſity* or *Omnipreſence*. For the *former*, he would ſee, neceſſarily makes the Deity materially diviſible, into Parts actually ſeparated from each other; and to be part of him here, and part there; which he could not but think monſtrouſly abſurd and impoſſible: and the *latter* renders God nothing at all, but *Imaginary Room*, *Vacuity* or *Space*, in which Bodies are capable of Moving up and down, or to and fro, without hindrance or impediment from any *Medium*. Which how it ſhould, any more than the former account for the Energetical Power, Wiſdom, Juſtice and Goodneſs of the Divine Nature, (the nobleſt Perfections he can have any Idea of) 'twould be as impoſſible for him to conceive, as it is for the Aſſertors of it to prove. The ancient Heathens allowed this Attribute of Immenſity to the Deity, by common conſent. *Tully* tells us, That *Pythagoras* aſſerted, *Deum eſſe animum per Naturam Rerum omnium intentum & comeantem*, *De Nat. Deorum.* And he cites it as the Opinion of *Thales Mileſius*; *Deorum omnia eſſe Plena*, De Legib. lib. 2. which *Virgil* alſo affirms expreſly,--- *Jovis omnia plena.* And again,

Deum

Deum namq; ire per omnes Terras tractuſq; maris, cœlumq; profundum, Georg. lib. 4. And *Seneca* tells us, That God is *ubiq; & omnibus præſto* (*a*). And in another place (*b*), *Quocunq; te flexeris, ibi Deum videbis Occurrentem tibi, nihil ab illo vacat, Opus ſuum ipſe Implet.*

(*a*) *Ep.* 95.
(*b*) *De Benef. lib.* 4.

2. If we conſider *Life*; Another Perfection which we find in our ſelves, we muſt needs conclude that this is in the Deity too, who is the great Author and Fountain of Life, in the higheſt Degree and Proportion imaginable. Now the Perfection of Life ſeems to conſiſt in *Activity*, or an *Energetical Power* to *Act*, or *Operate*; in oppoſition to *Impotence*, *Weakneſs*, or *Inability*. And this Perfection, no one ſure can poſſibly doubt to be in the Deity. For beſides that 'tis impoſſible for us to conceive that Life and Activity in our ſelves can proceed from a Dead and Unactive Principle; our Reaſon muſt needs reject the Notion of an *Inanimate*, and *Impotent* Deity, or of one that is any way defective in Power, as ſoon as it can be propoſed to it. Can we imagine that a Being from whom all Life, Power and Energy is derived, can be without it himſelf? and that he who hath, as *Simplicius* calls it, ὅλη δύναμις, a whole entire or perfect Power, that hath all the Power of Nature at His Command, can be unable to perform whatever is poſſible to be done? that is, whatever is agreeable to, and conſiſtent with, the other Attributes of the Divine Nature? And if ſo, muſt not then ſuch a Being be own'd to be *Almighty* or *Omnipotent*? From whence we ſee another great Attribute doth plainly ariſe. And of this Attribute of the Deity, there was a plain and clear Notion all along among the Heathen Writers

Writers; as appears from *Homer* in many places, who ſpeaking of God, ſays, δύναλαι γὰρ ἅπαντα. The ſame thing alſo we have in the Fragments of *Linus*, long before Him. And in *Callimachus* alſo, in expreſs words. As alſo in *Agatho*, an Ancient Greek Poet cited by *Ariſtotle* in his Ethicks. So in *Virgil* and *Ovid*, you have frequently the Title of *Pater Omnipotens* given to the Deity. And this Attribute of Infinite Power in God, *Epicurus* ſet himſelf with all his might to confute; denying there was any ſuch thing as Infinite Power at all; that thereby (ſays *Lucretius*, lib. 1.) he might take away Religion too.

And from hence alſo his Eternity might be naturally deduced. For we cannot conceive this Life or Activity, this Almighty Power that is in God, can ever ceaſe, decay or determine, any more than it can have had a beginning, and conſequently ſuch a Being muſt *neceſſarily Exiſt*, *be Eternal*, or *Endure* and *Live for Ever*.

3. If we proceed a little higher, and conſider *Senſibility* which is another great Perfection that we find in our ſelves, and ſome other Creatures, we muſt needs Attribute This alſo, and that in the higheſt degree, to the Divine Nature. I take this now in the general, for that Power or Faculty whereby any Being is capable of *taking Pleaſure* or *feeling Pain*. And ſuch a *Senſibility*, or ſomething Analogous to it, we cannot but think God muſt have in the moſt exquiſite Perfection, ſince our *Own*, as well as that of all other Creatures, muſt be derived from Him. And tho', indeed, we ought to think that the Infinite Perfection of his Nature ſecures him from all Poſſibility of feeling Pain, (ſince nothing can contradict his Will, run

counter to his Deſires, or fruſtrate his Expectations) yet we have no reaſon to ſuppoſe the Deity inſenſible of Pleaſure; but may juſtly conclude from hence, that he is always moſt perfectly happy. For he contains in Himſelf all Poſſible Good and Infinite Excellencies and Perfection, and of this He is moſt exquiſitely ſenſible, and conſequently muſt eternally be Pleaſed and delighted with himſelf in the Enjoyment of his own Infinite Fulneſs: And this Notion many of the Heathens had of God, that he was a moſt Happy Being; ſtiling Him frequently, Ζῶον μακάριον; and πᾶσαν ἔχον μακαριότητα μετ' ἀφθαρσίας.

4. But the Higheſt Perfection which we can diſcover in our ſelves, and in any created Beings whatever, is Reaſon. And this, no doubt, we ought alſo to attribute to God in the higheſt Degree and Perfection. Now the Perfection of Reaſon ſeems to conſiſt in theſe two Things:

1. In *Knowledge* and *Wiſdom* in the Underſtanding Faculty. And,

2. In *Rectitude* or *Righteouſneſs* in the Will.

All which we cannot but ſuppoſe the Divine Nature to be perfectly endowed with. And firſt as to *Knowledge* and *Wiſdom*; The *former* of which, implies an Underſtanding of things as they are in themſelves, according to their true Natures and Properties: And the *latter*, a conſidering of them as to their Relations to, and Dependances upon one another; or in other words, according as they are fit or qualified to be *Ends* or *Means*.

And theſe muſt certainly be in God, for the ſame reaſon that we have found in Him the other Perfections above-mentioned. To the Deity therefore, from

from this Conſideration, we ought to Attribute *Omniſcience*, and *Infinite*, or *moſt perfect Wiſdom*; for no doubt we ought to conclude, That the Deity both *knows every thing according to its Nature*, and alſo *underſtands its Uſefulneſs and Subſervience to any End, Deſign* or *Purpoſe* whatſoever. And therefore it was as ſtupidly or impiouſly ſaid by Mr. *Hobbs*, That there can be *no ſuch thing as Knowledge in God*, and *that he can have no Ends*. For I cannot imagine there can one ſo groſsly Ignorant and Fooliſh be found among Mankind, who doth really believe there can be an *ignorant* or a *fooliſh God*; and who would not abhor ſuch a Poſition as monſtrouſly abſurd and impoſſible. A Man muſt be a long while converſant with *Atheiſtical and Sceptical Philoſophy*, before he can grow ſo dull as not to perceive the force and Power of the Pſalmiſts Logick and reaſoning in *Pſal.* 94. *v.* 8, 9, *&c.* and he muſt be very *Studiouſly brutiſh* and *Learnedly fooliſh*, before he can think *that he that planted the Ear, ſhould not be able to hear himſelf; and that he that formed the Eye ſhould not ſee; and that he that gave and taught all Knowledge to Men ſhould have none himſelf.*

The mighty Reaſon that Mr. *Hobbs* is pleaſed to give, *Why there can be no Underſtanding in God is, becauſe that Faculty being in us nothing but a Tumult of Mind, raiſed by External Things that preſs the Organical Parts of our Bodies (a)*, there can be *no ſuch thing in God.* And in other places, he ſagaciouſly determines, *that 'tis impoſſible to hear without Ears, to ſee without Eyes, and to Underſtand without Brains, none of which God hath*; and therefore muſt be Ignorant and Stupid. But, methinks, 'tis very hardly

(a) *Leviath.* P. 190.

done of Him, to determine the Deity to be *Corporeal*, and yet to assign Him none of these Material Organs in order to make him an *Intelligent Being*. Why should not the same Matter which is able to form the Mechanick Understanding of so great a Philosopher, be capable of being modified as Intelligently in the Divine Nature? Must the Deity have the worst and most stupid Body of All others? Into what abominable Absurdities will such Principles as these lead a Man! or rather into what abominable Impieties and Blasphemies will Vice and Pride hurry him! He doth *not only think wickedly that the Deity is such an one as himself*, but infinitely worse; *a Corporeal Being that hath less and fewer Perfections than a Corporeal Man!* But I must not dwell on shewing the Design of this Writer, having sufficiently done it already. I shall only now add, that I think I have already proved that Matter alone cannot think, know, nor understand; and therefore it is not Mens *Brains*, but their *Soul* that hath this Intelligent Power; and no doubt an *Infinite and Immaterial Mind*, needs not any *Material Organs* to convey Knowledge to him, in whom all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge do Inhabit, and from whom they are all derived and do proceed.

And there was, Anciently amongst the Heathens, a clear belief of the Infinite Knowledge and Wisdom of God. *Tully* tells us, that *Thales* used commonly to say, *Deos omnia cernere*, the Gods behold or know all things. And *Seneca* saith, *Deo nihil Clausum est; interest Animis nostris, & mediis cogitationibus intervenit.* And as to the Wisdom of God, *Tully* deduces it after the same manner as we now have done, by attributing

attributing the Excellencies of the Creature to the Deity in the Higheſt Perfection. *Sapiens eſt Homo*, ſaith he, *& propterea Deus*; Man hath Wiſdom, and therefore God, from whom the Wiſdom in Man is derived, muſt needs have it himſelf. But again, As we muſt attribute to God Infinite Knowledge and Wiſdom; ſo we muſt *Rectitude of Will* or *Perfect Righteouſneſs* too. And ſince the Rectitude of the Will conſiſts in an exact Conformity of it and all its Affections to the Impartial Rule of Right Reaſon; we cannot but ſuppoſe alſo, that the Will of God is in a moſt exquiſite Conformity to the Dictates of his Unerring Reaſon; and that the Deity doth in every reſpect act exactly agreeable thereunto. And by this means we ſhall find that God muſt be Juſt and Righteous in all his Proceedings, *and that he always executeth Juſtice and Righteouſneſs in the Earth, and delights in theſe things.* Our Adverſaries, indeed, do aſſert, That there is no ſuch thing *as any diſtinction between Good and Evil, Juſt and Unjuſt, that can be taken from any common Rule, or from the Objects themſelves; but only with Relation to the Perſon that uſeth them; who calls that Good which he loves, and that Evil which he hates (a).* That *God doth every thing by his Irreſiſtible Power*; and that in *that is founded our Obedience to Him, and not in any Principle of Gratitude to him (b) for Benefits which we have received from him.* That *Juſtice is founded in Power, and that whatever is Enacted by a Soveraign Power can't be Unjuſt.* The Groundleſsneſs of which Impious and Dangerous Notions, I ſhall fully ſhew in a ſubſequent Diſcourſe; and therefore ſhall only now obſerve, that this Way of depriving the Deity of theſe moſt excellent

(a) *Leviath.* p. 24, 63, 64. *Spinoza Oper. Poſth.* p. 37.

(q) *Leviath.* P. 187.

cellent and lovely Attributes of Juſtice and Goodneſs, and making Him to Act only according to the Arbitrary Dictates of Irreſiſtible Power, gives us the Notion of a Devil inſtead of a Deity, of an abſolute Tyrant, inſtead of a righteous Governour of the World; and is directly contrary to the Sober and Conſiderate Sentiments of all Mankind *, in whoſe Minds a plain Diſtinction between *Good* and *Evil* is founded, and who can never be brought without doing great violence to themſelves, to aſſert that the Deity is not guided in all things by the Eternal Rules of Truth and Juſtice, and *that the Judge of all the Earth ſhould not do right.* They ſee the comlineſs and lovelineſs that there is in good and juſt Actions among Men; and therefore cannot ſuppoſe that an Infinite and Almighty Being can do any thing contrary to them; they are ſenſible that Deviations from thoſe Rules proceed only from the Defects and Imperfections that are in our Natures; but that God, who is Ἰκανώτατον ἁπάντων ἢ αὐταρκέστατον, who *poſſeſſeth and ſuſtaineth all things*, cannot make uſe of any indirect Means to procure himſelf Happineſs, or to ſtave off Miſery; ſince the Perfection of his Nature gives him all the *one*, and ſecures him from all the *other*. And they which certainly never believe that God will do any Action, that they do not think ſuitable to be done

* *Plato* calls the Deity Ἰδέα τ' ἀγαθοῦ, the very Idea or Eſſence of Good. And herein he ſeems to have followed the *Pythagoreans* and *Timæus Locrus* in particular: Who aſſerts of *Mind*, according to him the firſt Principle of the Univerſe, that it is, τ' ἀγαθοῦ φύσιν, of the Nature of Good: And ſaith further, Θεόν τε ὀνομαίνεσθαι ἀρχάν τε πρῶτ' ἀείων, that they call it God, and the Principle of the beſt things.

Ariſtotle alſo reckons *Moral Goodneſs* among the Perfections of the Divine Nature: And *Plutarch* ſaith, 'tis one of the chiefeſt Excellencies in the Deity; and that on this account it is that Men love and honour Him.

Hierocles *in Carm. Pythagor.* aſſerts the Deity to be *Eſſentially Good*, and not by Accidental or External Motives.

done by a good and juſt Man; But will on juſt Grounds conclude, That whatever Excellence or Perfections they can any way diſcover to be in a *Good* Man, muſt needs be in the higheſt Proportion in God, and conſequently that the Deity muſt be moſt *Righteous, Juſt and Good, and moſt Kind, Merciful and Gracious in all his Dealings with his Creatures.*

And thus we ſee how by conſidering the Excellencies and Perfections which we find in our ſelves, and attributing them in the Higheſt Proportion to that Supream Being the Deity, from whence they muſt all be derived; we may attain to a good and clear Knowledge of the Properties and Attributes of the Divine Nature: We may find them to be ſuch as are agreeable to the plaineſt Reaſon and to Philoſophical Truth: and conſequently conclude, that they can have no ſuch weak and precarious Foundation as the *Order of the Civil Power*, and the *Will* of the *Supream Magiſtrate.*

And were it now my Buſineſs, 'twere very eaſie from hence to ſhew alſo the *True Foundation of Religious Worſhip*; that it doth depend on the Right Apprehenſions and Notions that we have of the Attributes of God; and that our Obedience to Him, is founded in our Gratitude to him for the Benefits which we receive from Him, and conſequently is *our Reaſonable Service.* But the Proof of this will be more proper in another Place.

FINIS.